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HOW TO START YOUR ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNING

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In general, all languages in the world exist due to the fact that human being needs to interact one another. They can neither interact nor communicate well without mastering good language skill. Therefore, a language functioning as a means of communication must be able to be learnt by any learner, no matter what nation and ethnic groups they come from.

Of course everything that we want to achieve needs some certain processes. English Language Learning is one of the examples. In this case, all linguists agree that there are some processes or steps required in language learning which are often called 'The Four (4) Language Skills: Listening, Speaking, Reading, and Writing'.

1. Listening

The first step of any language learning starts from Listening. As we know that human being wherever they live with no particular what nation they are from, will never be able to communicate verbally one another without listening capability or skill. That's why, those who have a trouble with their ears especially the permanent deaf people since they were born or very small kids, they will not be able to communicate properly. Even they can neither communicate nor speak at all (mute). In other words, without listening skill the hearer or listener as a learner will not be able to catch the idea from any other speaker (person). And the incapability of catching the idea from other people will not enable them to produce any utterances orally.

2. Speaking

Based on the explanation above, theoretically everybody whose capability of listening is quite good, he or she will automatically be able to speak or communicate with other people properly. Therefore, it is a wrong opinion if a group of people would say that learning some certain language is more difficult than other languages, or even it is considered to be the most difficult language to learn.

Whether it is consciously or unconsciously, in this learning process the learners (especially the beginners) need to repeat, identify, and or differentiate every utterance (more frequently if necessary) produced by the speaker. The utterances can be in the forms of loose words, phrases, sentences, or even text. While they are listening, at the same time they are trying to catch the idea or message from the speaker either it is explicit or implicit. Some other sources that might be useful and helpful in language learning are from radio, t v, and some other audio visual appliances. After repeating or trying to catch both the explicit and implicit messages or ideas which are often heard from the speaker and other sources either consciously or unconsciously, the learners will comprehend and be able to identify them very well. Finally, they are capable of producing their own words and

utterances orally based on what they have heard, listened, and experienced.

3. Reading

In this step, the learners should have already been familiar with certain words, specific terms, statements, or even text that they have learnt from hearing or listening directly or indirectly from the speaker and any other sources, such as radio, t v, video, and some other audio visual appliances orally. Moreover, in achieving the Reading skill, the learners have to be familiar with the words, phrases, statements, and text in the written form. Therefore, the learners are demanded to practice pronouncing each new words or phrases more frequently in accordance with the English language rules. The words or phrases that they pronounce have to be adjusted with the pronunciation that they just used to hear or listen when the learners learnt to listen and speak in the previous step. This pronunciation practice is very important in English language learning especially the two words or phrases that are pronounced similarly, or even exactly the same but have different meaning. This often makes many learners, especially the beginners tend to pronounce one word for another. Of course the wrong pronunciation will cause a different interpretation or meaning.

The other difficulty of pronouncing the words in English is that there is neither consistency nor specific rules in pronouncing the words. Here are some examples of words or pair-words which are frequently not pronounced properly and sometimes make the learners find it difficult to distinguish:

a. The Two Words, phrases, or Statements Pronounced Similarly

- 'Walk for work'; This means that the learners tend to pronounce [wɔk] instead of [wɔk] for the word 'work'.
- 'Sick for six'; This means that the learners tend to pronounce [slk] instead of [slks] for the word 'six'.
- 'back' for 'bag'; 'impotent' for 'important';
- 'brick' for 'break'; etc
- 'I scream' and 'ice cream';
- 'she sells' and 'sea shells'; etc.

b. The Two Different Words Pronounced Exactly the Same

- Cell and sell; flower and flour; sea and see; red and read (past form / V2). Those pair of words have the same pronunciation, but the learners tend to pronounce them differently.

c. No Consistency in Pronouncing the Words of the Same Letter

- 1) The same letter pronounced differently according to its position

- Letter 'c' in the words 'cook, because, and cake' is pronounced [k], but it will become [s] in the words such as 'peace, choice, and practice'.
- Letter 'ch' in the words like 'choose, chicken, and coach is pronounced [tʃ]. While in the word 'machine, it will change into [ʃy].
- Letter 'r' in the words 'road, right, and read' is pronounced differently from that of in the words 'very, carry, door, and floor'
- Letter 't' in the words 'take, try, tall, and ten' is pronounced [t], but it will become [tʃ] in the words such as 'picture, capture, and maturity. Then [t] is pronounced [s] in the words such as 'listen, patient, national, and solution'. Meanwhile, the words like 'get, cat, meat, captain, wanted, and continue', the sound [t] is still in existence although the position of letter [t] is in the last or in the middle of word.

- And many others

2) The same letter, and the same position but pronounced differently

- Letter 'h' in the words 'house, help, and hotel' is pronounced [h]; In the words 'hour, and honor' it will be pronounced [a]; While in the words 'humid, humanity, and humorous', it will change [hy].
- Letter 'u' in the words 'ugly, unknown, and umbrella', is pronounced [ʌ]; But in the words such as 'university, utility, UK, and useful', it is pronounced [y]; While in the words 'upon, and urgent', it is pronounced [ə];
- And many others.

4. Writing

This step is the highest level of the four skills in English language learning. In this last step, the writer is not only demanded his wide mastery of vocabulary and grammatical structure, but is also a kind of certain skill in writing. As we know that writing activity is not such an easy work to do. Not all people have such this kind of skill. Besides mastering enough vocabulary and good grammatical structure, the writer is also demanded to have a certain skill or capability of writing. The writing skill includes such as: how to express his ideas by exposing a series of words that he has mastered to be arranged together with the appropriate structures to form sentences which are then interconnected and related one another, and finally they are formed in one text as a whole.

One composition is considered to be as a good work of writing when the readers feel that the text they are reading is not boring, and easy to understand. Furthermore, by reading the text, they can really enjoy it.